

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are currently pending.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 2 and 5-12 under 35 U.S.C § 102 as anticipated by EP 225,036 (“Szekely”), claims 1, 2 and 5-12 under 35 U.S.C § 102 as anticipated by EP 310,100 (“Hansen”), and claims 3, 4 and 13-18 as obvious over Hansen. In view of the following comments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections.

The Office rejected new claims 13-18 as obvious, merely asserting that the specified sizing agents were "known." This rejection is inherently inconsistent with the other rejections in the Office Action. Specifically, by rejecting claim 1 as anticipated by Szekely and Hansen, the Office was asserting that the claimed sizing agents were necessarily disclosed in both references. Yet, claims 13-18 which are directed to the individual types of sizing agents of claim 1 were rejected as obvious. Thus, according to the rejection of claims 13-18, the specific sizing agents of claim 1 were not disclosed in Szekely or Hansen.

Stated another way, the Office's rejection of claims 13-18 as "obvious" highlights the facts that (1) the anticipation rejections are improper; and (2) the Office never identified in the applied art where any of the claimed sizing agents are disclosed. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

The present invention relates to unique polyolefin fibers having unique sizing agents. More specifically, the sizing agents of the present invention comprise at least a product based

on fatty-acid polyethylene glycol ester and phosphoric acid ester compounds, natural-oil-based, a product based on a fatty-acid-derived polyethylene glycol ester, and/or a product based on non-ionic surfactant and esterquats. The required, specified sizing agents assist fiberization, assist wetting by the composition of the hydraulic-setting substance to which they have been added, and promotes adhesion to the hydraulic-setting substance. These novel fibers have beneficial properties owing at least in part to these functionalities, particularly for use in reinforcing products based on fibers and a hydraulic-setting substance. The applied art neither teaches nor suggests such unique fibers.

Szekely and Hansen disclose fibers containing sizing agents limited to specified antistatic agents. Thus, neither of these references teaches or suggested the required sizing agents. This failure of disclosure is significant given the required functionality of the claimed fibers, namely assisting in fiberization, assisting in wetting by the composition of the hydraulic-setting substance to which they have been added, and promoting adhesion to the hydraulic-setting substance. The claimed sizing agents yield fibers having such functionality and, thus, yield fibers having improved properties. In stark contrast, sizing agents containing only the specified antistatic agents in the applied art would yield inferior products having inferior properties.

This is particularly true for claims 13, 14, 17 and 18: neither Szekely nor Hansen discloses fibers containing sizing agents comprising fatty-acid-derived polyethylene glycol ester, and their fibers yield inferior products.

This is also particularly true for claims 13-16: neither Szekely nor Hansen discloses fibers containing sizing agents comprising phosphoric acid ester compounds, natural-oil-based,

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and/or esterquats, and their fibers yield inferior products.

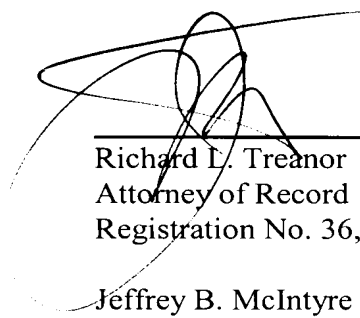
In sum, none of the applied art teaches or suggests the required sizing agents, meaning that none of the applied art teaches or suggests the claimed invention.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C §§ 102 and 103.

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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